



Research Brief

Behavior Management Plans

Question: What are the characteristics of effective school-wide behavior management plans?

Summary of Findings:

What should be in place to provide a safe environment where students can learn and teachers can teach, in an atmosphere that is free from behavioral distractions and is proactive in heading off major disciplinary problems? Research suggests that "...improvements in school discipline will create an environment more conducive to academic achievement" (School discipline/codes of conduct and zero tolerance).

As a result of some court cases between 1968-1975, due process rights were given to students for even minor discipline issues. The challenge of making certain that students' rights are respected and adhered to, while also enforcing appropriate behavior in a safe environment, has schools reviewing and modifying their discipline plans. Although there is no one right plan for every school, in research in this area, it has been found that there are characteristics that effective schools have in common.

Commonalities

- School and classroom expectations, rules and consequences are in sync and posted in visible areas
- The expectations are high but not impossible to follow
- The school has a strong emphasis on learning and anything that impedes on that will not be tolerated. As a result, all staff are in agreement with the plan and are consistent and fair in following it
- The rules, expectations and consequences are taught to the students
- Appropriate behavior is modeled and reinforced by the teachers
- Students are accepted and treated as individuals and there are productive relationships with them
- Teachers are the final authority in the classroom and are supported by the administration
- The punishment fits the crime and is given out close to the time of the violation. The consequence deals with the student's infraction and is not a reaction to the student's personality or character
- Administration is supportive and highly visible
- The staff is visible, especially in high traffic and blind spot areas
- The plan is preventative and strategies for preventing problems are established (i.e. chaos in hallways in between classes, etc.)
- It has provisions for working with the students who seem to be "at risk" and in trouble regularly
- Students have had input into the plan, expectations and consequences
- The plan should be reviewed by staff and representative students at least on a yearly basis and revised as appropriate
- There is an open relationship with the community and they are well informed about the expectations, rules and consequences
- The parents are contacted early and as often as possible when their child has gotten into trouble
- The rules, expectations and consequences are written up and sent home. Many schools require them to be returned with a parent's signature.

When establishing consequences, they should fit the infraction and students view it as a punishment. The most effective are taking away privileges and not being around friends. There should be several from which to choose so that it will be something to encourage the student to change his/her behavior.



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“Punishments should be viewed as a consequence-but not a solution-to student misconduct” (School discipline/codes of conduct and zero tolerance).

Researchers have observed behavioral improvements in settings where students are taught to attribute their success or failure to their personal effort, and in which they (1) learn to check their own behavior and judge its appropriateness; (2) talk themselves through a task, using detailed, step-by-step instructions; and (3) learn and apply problem-solving steps when confronting classroom issues. (Schoolwide and classroom discipline)

Sample programs

- Conflict resolution training
- Anger management course
- Peer mediation
- Prosocial skills training
- Group/individual discussions with school counselor
- Work with community agencies to support the school's programs
- Provide tutoring to help student develop literacy skills in different areas, which is often from where the misbehavior stems
- Crime stoppers program-About 2,000 schools in the U.S. financially reward students for reporting vandalism, drug use/selling, having weapons, and other crimes in the school.

Sample consequences

- Lunch detention
- After school detention
- Friday School (instead of Saturday School)
- Write a self-analysis: describe the conflict, their contribution, the contributions of others involved; how it should be resolved; and how to avoid it from happening again
- In-school suspension (Research has found that out of school suspension is most often a reward for the student). This program includes guidance for change and support for the change



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Online Resources:

Creating a climate for learning: Effective classroom management techniques
Different management strategies for teachers are presented in this piece.
http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr155.shtml

Developing a discipline plan for you
This article provides descriptions of various types of discipline philosophies from Fred Jones to Glasser to Canter as well as several others.
<http://www.humboldt.edu/~tha1/discip-options.html>

Discipline that supports achievement
A brief review of results of studies conducted on school wide discipline are presented in this piece.
<http://www.districtadministration.com/page.cfm?p=926>

11 techniques for better classroom discipline
Some specific discipline techniques for the classroom teacher are described in this article.
<http://www.honorlevel.com/techniques.xml>

Guidelines for discipline plans
This is a description of the expectations of a discipline plan from the state of Vermont.
http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/pdfdoc/pgm_safeschools/pubs/discipline_plan_03.pdf

Research-based effectiveness of the Peace Education Foundation Model
This piece asks and answers questions about the Peace Education Foundation Model whose goal it is to “educate children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and to promote peacemaking skills in homes, schools and communities throughout the world.”
<http://www.peace-ed.org/whoarewe/whitepapers/faq.pdf>

School climate and discipline
This is a reference list with live links to sites dealing with climate and discipline.
<http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cell/discipline.php>

School corporal punishment alternatives
A description of different types of positive discipline programs along with links to them are provided.
<http://www.stophitting.com/disatschool/alternatives.pdf>

School discipline/codes of conduct, and zero tolerance
This is an extensive and detailed report from Canadian principals to assist schools in developing their discipline plan.
<http://www.schoolfile.com/safehealthyschools/whatsnew/capzerotolerance.htm#Executive%20Summary>

Schoolwide and classroom discipline



The Principals' Partnership
<http://www.principalspartnership.com>
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A synthesis of research on the components of effective discipline programs is presented in this article.

<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html>

Solutions through peer mediation

This article describes different types of peer mediation models.

<http://www.kellybear.com/TeacherArticles/TeacherTip13.html>

Sparing rods and spoiling children: The impossibility of school discipline

Some concerns about legal issues faced by teachers and administrators regarding students' due process rights are described in this article.

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1282/is_19_56/ai_n13675422/print

The price is right? Should students be paid to turn in kids who break the rules?

This is a brief description of some of the programs that pay students for information about students who break rules is presented.

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0EPF/is_1_105/ai_n15337801/print

Book

Boynton, M. & Boynton, C. (2005). Preventing and solving discipline problems. ASCD: Alexandria, VA.

This book provides ideas and suggestions for school wide as well as classroom discipline plans. It is succinctly written with educators as its focus audience.

Submitted Date: 7/11/06

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<http://www.principalspartnership.com>

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